

Introduction

Old ideas can sometime use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings – *Jane Jacobs*

The greenest building is the one that's already built. – *Carl Elephante, US National Trust for Historic Preservation*

Section I: Property Rights

Under the Ontario Heritage Act, listing and protecting heritage properties is a municipal responsibility, not a private responsibility. A heritage property may be designated by the municipality over an owner's objection, and the owner may appeal the designation to the Conservation Review Board (for individual property designations) or the Ontario Municipal Board (for heritage district designations).

a) Do you agree that a municipal council should act if necessary to designate heritage property even where the owner disagrees?

Yes, I believe that the municipal council should be prepared to designate heritage property even where the owner disagrees, provided the case is a strong one.

Section II: Adequacy of Protection

a) How will you balance development pressures against the need to preserve archaeological and heritage structures and neighbourhoods?

I agree that it is a balance that must be achieved. There are strong reasons to act in favour of preservation provided that all factors have been carefully and thoroughly examined. Conditions must be set to ensure that the property or building that is the subject of the preservation is not destroyed by deliberate neglect in the process.

b) Do you think that Brantford's built and natural heritage features are adequately identified, and adequately protected? If not, what do you think should be done to improve the situation?

No, I don't think that we have done a thorough enough job of identifying what needs to be preserved, or been determined enough in our methods to ensure the preservation of valuable sites and assets..

Section III: Role of Municipality

Under Ontario law, listing and protecting heritage property is primarily a municipal responsibility.

a) What do you think is the single most important action the municipal government could undertake to encourage heritage preservation in Brantford?

To make a strong statement of intent regarding preservation. The statement would make it clear that the municipality is prepared to designate in the public interest, against the owners objection where there is a strong indication that this is needed. This would then act as the guiding feature with regard to any proposed project.

b) How do you think Brantford compares to other North American cities in its efforts to preserve its heritage? And do you have any examples of best practices that Brantford could adopt?

I have not studied this (other cities) enough to make a comment. I don't believe that we are anywhere near the head of the pack, however.

Section IV: Financial Incentives

a) Given the large amount of public support for heritage preservation, will you support funding, laws, policy, and appointments that encourage it? Please list any specific initiatives that you would propose.

Yes, but the funding does not have to come exclusively from the municipal pot of money. An application of the best practices of land trusts may have merit here.

b) Will you support financial assistance and advice to those who seek to conserve and restore their heritage properties?

I would be open to exploring this as an option provided there are clear criteria that could be applied.

Section V: Adaptive Reuse

As our communities change, it may no longer be practical to use heritage buildings such as schools or churches for their original purpose.

a) Would you encourage the adaptive reuse of Brantford's built heritage when its traditional uses are no longer feasible?

Of course one should always examine the full range of options.

Section VI: Heritage Conservation Districts

The Ontario Heritage Act enables municipal councils to protect not only individual properties but also districts of cultural heritage value or interest. Part V of the Act, entitled "Heritage Conservation Districts", deals with the protection and enhancement of an aggregate of buildings, streets and open spaces that as a group, represent a collective asset to a community in much the same way as an individually designated property.

a) Do you think that Heritage Conservation Districts help communities?

Yes, but the process for designation must be transparent and fair.

b) Do you have examples in your community of loss of heritage that you think should have been saved? If so, what would have been needed to change the outcome?

The south side Colborne district downtown was handled carelessly. I don't understand how expropriation was justified without a clear plan in place for what is to follow after demolition.
